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Vehicle Backing Safety

Roughly one out of every four accidents involves poor backing technique. Practically all backing accidents can be prevented. The key is to plan ahead to avoid backing in the first place. You should only back up your vehicle as a last resort. If backing cannot be avoided, it is better to back in upon arrival than to back out later while departing. Conduct a visual walk-around of the vehicle to identify potential hazards immediately before backing to know what is beside and behind your vehicle, and include overhead clearances. Make certain no pedestrian is behind you before backing. Back slowly and check both sides as well as to the rear prior to and continuously during backing; use all of your mirrors and turn your head. Lightly use the horn to warn others while backing.

Although ultimate responsibility for safe backing falls on the driver, it is helpful to use a reliable guide or spotter whenever possible to assist when backing. An extra set of eyes could make all the difference, particularly in situations where there are blind spots or when someone or something could come into your path. The driver and spotter should use hand signals in addition to verbal ones and make sure you understand each other's signals before backing.

Policy: When backing a State-owned service or utility vehicle, all drivers are required to:

- A. Walk around the service or utility vehicle to check the area prior to backing, when no passenger is present.
- B. Ask a passenger, if present, to stand outside and guide the employee while he/she is backing the vehicle.